

There's No Place Like Home

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Summary: What if Zelena's portal never opened and Killian and Emma never went back in time? What if Emma really decided to leave Storybrooke for New York? Can these two still find their way to one another without magic or a grand adventure?

## There's No Place Like Home

He wonders if he will get even a wink of sleep tonight. With the filled to the brim yellow bug parked outside of the loft and it's driver teetering on the far edge of the bed, he doubts it very much. From the moonlight streaming in from her open window he can just make out the knotted mass of her blonde curls piled atop her extra pillow, leaving her neck and shoulders bare and beckoning. But she's leaving—so he can't. The divide is too wide and if he reaches, he know he will fall.

Fall farther, that is.

Is there really any farther to go?

He loves her. He loves her so much that he has no other choice than to let her go. Tomorrow morning, he'll watch her drive away with Henry, off to find whatever she thinks is waiting for her in New York City. The possibility of what they could be will always be just that, a possibility unfulfilled. Pushing her further will do no good and he's already tried with no success. He has to let her go and hope that she "misses it"—misses him.

The fact that he's sharing her bed on her last night, it just doesn't mean as much as he wishes it could. With Henry passed out on the couch after the revelry of the farewell celebration went late into the night, he had been unexpectedly confronted with Mary Margaret's unrelenting demand that he not walk back to Granny's in the bitter cold. David's incredulous expression had added much needed humor to the tension filled moment as the suggestion of Killian sharing Emma's

bed had fallen without second thought from his wife's lips. Emma had shown the necessary reluctance, but eventually relented as there really was no other option left available.

But he needs to be more than an option. He needs to be her choice.

She shifts beside him and he closes his eyes, not wanting her to find him still awake watching over her. Stinging as it may be, he does have a sliver of pride still remaining that needs to be protected if he's to find his way here without her once she's gone. Slowing his breathing, he feigns slumber and fails miserably in his attempt to clamp down the buzzing beneath his skin growing stronger with each creak and dip of the bed beside him as she moves. His facade almost cracks as her breath warms the skin of his neck, signaling how close she has come, too purposeful an action to be unconsciously made. This proves to be true when the fingers of his hand resting atop his stomach are tentatively covered by hers, her blunt fingernails tickling his skin through his thin shirt as she curves her fingers between his knuckles.

It's more than he can take and he has to respond, feeling suddenly stupidly hopeful that maybe she's trying to tell him something, that she's notâ€¦

"I'm sorry, Killian."

Her words are whispered across her pillow, obviously not meant to be heard. The finality of them ring like the scream of a banshee in the hollow corners of his heart.

Hours pass with him unmoving, the fatigue of his thoughts eventually winning out as he falls asleep with the weight of her hand still covering his. When he wakes, she's gone without a final goodbye.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hey, you wanna play "White Knight Chronicles" after dinner?"<p>

Pushing the macaroni and cheese around the bottom of her bowl, Emma cringes at the excitement she hears in Henry's question, knowing she just won't be able to muster the response he's hoping for.

"Sorry kid, not tonight. We'll set up the PlayStation this weekend, okay?"

When he doesn't respond right away she peers up from her bowl and finds her son looking at her with obvious worry in his eyes.

"Are you okay, Mom?"

No.

"Yeah, I'm fine, kid."

She's a terrible liar, so she doesn't even try to make that sound true. Thankfully, Henry doesn't push, instead hopping down from his stool to clear their dishes in silence. It's not really like him to let things go that easily and if she wasn't so caught up in her own

thoughts that might have registered as something she should look into. But she's just so damn distracted by the voices in her head telling her things she's just too stubborn to hear.

She's still sitting at the counter an hour later, watching the shadows move across the linoleum from the late summer sunset and thinking about dinners spent laughing with her parents, smiles shared with Killian when they both forgot to look away. Henry's since retired to his room with his laptop, all of his belongings unpacked while the majority of hers still linger in half opened boxes strewn about the two bedroom loft. It's been 5 days and she just can't bring herself to settle in. Every time she tries it always ends up the same, every placement of a frame never feeling right, the arrangement of clothes in her closet all wrong and soon abandoned.

\_This isn't home.\_

Letting that thought finally through her well constructed denial is both a relief and a curse, the truth of it and the decisions already half made daunting to say the least. Closing her eyes, she takes a calming breath and lifts the soft cotton of her t-shirt from her chest as perspiration breaks out and panic begins to settle in. She really needs a drink.

Barely hearing the knock on her door as it sounds in time with the ice cubes filling her glass, she makes her way down the hallway with curiosity at who it could be. They don't know anyone here yet, outside of the old lady who lives across the hall with all the cats and man, she really hopes it isn't her. She's a lovely woman, but the smell of kitty litter has settled into her wrinkled skin like a stale perfume.

She has barely opened her door a crack when the realization of who it is hits her like a freight train. Definitely not the cat lady.

"Killian?"

The glass in her hand slips from her fingers, but his are there to catch it. He's there to catch her. With his hand covering hers over the glass and the warmth of his gaze washing over her from head to toe, she feels like herself again for the first time since the morning she drove away from Storybrooke, as if her heart is suddenly remembering how to beat. Her arms are around him before she can talk herself out of it. His groan vibrates against her chest as he reciprocates, her glass now in his hand clinking against the curve of his hook at the small of her back as he holds her close.

She doesn't let go as she begins to speak, too content and too scared to move as she whispers her questions against his ear.

"Why? How?"

"Henry called me, told me you neededâ€¦|you needed me."

"I do, we both do."

Later that night as he slides under the covers beside her, in the bed that won't be slept in again after tonight, she reaches over to tangle their fingers together the same way she had done that last

night before she left. This time, it's not a goodbye, not when he tightens his hold and turns on his side to face her with love in his eyes. The lead in this dance of theirs shifts back to her and she doesn't hesitate to take it, swaying forward to sweep his lips into a long overdue kiss. Deep longing comes unrestrained and she welcomes the weight of his body as he rolls her beneath him, their mouths finally speaking in ways that words never could. It's only the knowledge of Henry sleeping next door that eventually finds the fervor of their kisses slowing down, much more to be explored at a more appropriate time pulsing low where he's pressed deep between her thighs. His lips pull from hers and his head falls heavy on the pillow by her ear, everywhere their bodies touch thrumming like a live wire as they both try to settle their breathing.

"I'm sorry I had to leave, but I needed to see ifâ€|"

She's suddenly face to face with him as he braces himself on his elbow to look down at her with his expressive blue eyes asking the question, the answer she's no longer afraid to give already falling from her lips.

"â€|I missed you. I missed all of you and I'm ready to go home."

End  
file.